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5 DAYS TO GO, RACE FOR WHITE HOUSE REMAINS RAZOR-TIGHT

The contest for the White House remained tight with Kamala Harris and Donald Trump holding rallies in key battleground state of Wisconsin. The latest CNN polls showed that Harris has a narrow advantage in Michigan and Wisconsin, while she and Trump remain tied in Pennsylvania. In Michigan, Harris holds a lead over Trump by 48% to 43% among likely voters. Harris also leads Trump in Wisconsin, where 51% support her to 45% for Trump, but the race is tied in Pennsylvania. P9

PM Modi warns of forces bent on tarnishing India

At Rashtriya Ekta Diwas event, PM exhorts people to identify & unmask 'urban Naxals'

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA
@ Ahmedabad

Prime Minister Narendra Modi attends the Ekta Diwas Parade at the Statue of Unity at Ekta Nagar in Gujarat's Narmada district on Thursday | PTI

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said certain forces, both domestic and foreign, are trying to destabilise India and tarnish the country's image. Addressing a grand Rashtriya Ekta Diwas event marking Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's 149th birth anniversary near the Statue of Unity at Ekta Nagar in Gujarat, Modi also stressed the need to "identify urban Naxals and unmask them".

"Some forces, some distorted mindsets, both within and outside India, are deeply unsettled by the country's growing strength and unity. They aim to spread instability and anarchy, and are actively working against India's economic interests. These forces want to send a wrong message to global investors, painting a negative image of India," Modi said.

The same forces are targeting the armed forces with misinformation campaigns, trying to sow division within. They seek to divide India along caste lines, with the singular goal of weakening Indian society and unity. They fear a developed India because their politics thrives on a weak, poor India, he said. "For five decades, this dirty and destructive politics worked to weaken the country. We must identify the urban Naxalites. Just as we defeated Naxalism that once thrived in forests... We need to recognise those who dream of breaking India, who work under false masks to destroy the nation, and we must stand firmly against them," he said.

Inspired by Sardar Patel's vision for social unity, India is moving towards a uniform civil code — a secular civil code — that will help eliminate discrimination among different social classes, strengthen national unity, and drive the nation to achieve its goals, he said. P8

Kharge pulls up Siddu, DKS over Shakti confusion

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

CONGRESS president Mallikarjun Kharge on Thursday took Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar to task over remarks on revision of the Shakti scheme (free ride for women in government buses) and said creating unnecessary confusion will only help opposition parties.

"You have implemented the five guarantees and we (Congress) are planning to emulate them in poll-bound Maharashtra. But you (Shivakumar) stated that one (Shakti guarantee) scheme would be dropped," Kharge said at a function to mark the birth anniversary of Sardar Patel and the death anniversary of Indira Gandhi at the KPCC office here.

Shivakumar on Wednesday stated that the Shakti scheme would be revised as a section of women was in its favour.

While Shivakumar tried to convince Kharge stating that he did not mean dropping the scheme, Kharge hit back, "I have read it in newspapers, have you read it or not?" Siddaramaiah too tried to convince Kharge stating that Shivakumar had only spoken about revising the scheme. Unconvinced, Kharge said that the remarks created confusion and the rival parties would use it to their advantage.

"If we do not go as per the budget, we will go bankrupt and there will be no money to even develop roads. If this government fails, there will be nothing left to pass on to the next generation (of Congress leaders) except for the bad name and the latter has to bear the brunt for another 10 years," he said.

Stating that the Congress in Maharashtra will not announce umpteen guarantees, he said that it will stick to budgetary provisions to implement those planned.

"This is why Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi stated that he will not announce the party's promises until he is convinced that they have budgetary provisions. We have done a 15-day study to make the promises fit into the budget and will announce them in Mumbai and Nagpur soon," he said.

Kharge asked the CM and DCM to keep away from their "sycophants" who always attempt to create confusion.

Kharge clarified that he would not interfere in classification of SC quota.

CONTINUED ON: P4

AICC chief Mallikarjun Kharge with CM Siddaramaiah at a function to mark Indira Gandhi's death anniversary in Bengaluru on Thursday| EXPRESS

EXPRESS READ

BPL Group founder Nambiar passes away

Bengaluru: The founder of Indian electronics brand BPL Group, T P Gopalan Nambiar, passed away on Thursday at the age of 94, family sources confirmed. Nambiar, affectionately known as TPG, had been unwell for some time and he passed away at his home around 10.15am. P5

Waqf row: 5 hurt as mob attacks house

Hubballi: A local Muslim leader and four others were injured when a mob threw stones at his house at Kadakol in Haveri district on Wednesday night. Police said that a group of people resorted to stone throwing over fears that their houses were being recorded as Waqf land. As many as 32 people have been arrested. P4

Pant, Rahul & Iyer back in auction pool

Three captains — **Rishabh Pant** (Delhi Capitals), **K L Rahul** (Lucknow Super Giants) and **Shreyas Iyer** (Kolkata Knight Riders) — are back in the auction pool, as the deadline for the Indian Premier League player retentions ended on Thursday.

Mumbai Indians retained their five star players, including Hardik Pandya, Rohit Sharma, Suryakumar Yadav, Jasprit Bumrah and Tilak Varma. They exhausted full retention purse of **₹75 cr**.

OTHER TOP STARS
Jasprit Bumrah (MI): **₹18 cr**
Sanju Samson (RR): ₹18 cr
Rashid Khan (GT): **₹18 cr**
Pat Cummins (SRH): **₹18 cr**
Yashasvi Jaiswal (RR): **₹18 cr**

TOP RETENTIONS

Among those retained, South African Heinrich Klaasen (Sunrisers Hyderabad) will be highest paid player, at **₹23 crore**. He pipped Virat Kohli (**₹21 cr**) who has been retained by RCB. Nicholas Pooran stays with LSG for same price.

MS DHONI HAS BEEN RETAINED BY CSK AS AN 'UNCAPPED PLAYER' FOR ₹4 CR

REPORT: P11

Road rage: Five-year-old boy injured in Bengaluru

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

IN a road rage incident, a five-year-old boy was injured when an unidentified cab driver threw a stone at the windshield of the car in which he was travelling along with his sister and parents.

Anoop George and his wife Jiss Jacob, both techies, were returning home in their car along with their son and 11-year-old daughter after Deepavali shopping when the incident took place at Choodasandra in Parappana Agrahara police limits on Wednesday around 9.30pm. Two bike-borne men, who chased their car, blocked it at Choodasandra and one of them threw a stone at the windshield.

After the windshield broke, pieces of glass hit the boy and he started bleeding profusely. Anoop immediately rushed him to a nearby hospital. Glass pieces pierced his head. Meanwhile, the police arrested a man, who helped the cab driver chase the couple's car on his motorcycle.

In the video, recorded by Jiss, a man can be seen asking Anoop to roll down the windshield. Unaware of what was happening, Anoop drove away. The accused, who was riding pillion, picked a stone and threw it at the windshield of Anoop's car.

CONTINUED ON: P3